

The Week in Washington

New Call for Spy Agency Secrecy May Stir Old Battle in Congress

An article by Allen W. Dulles, retired director of the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), is bound to revive an old battle on Capitol Hill.

The article, prepared for the Encyclopedia Britannica, is a wide-ranging review of intelligence techniques. It carries a warning against further congressional restraints on the CIA.

The CIA has been criticized periodically since 1949, two years after its establishment, when Russia's first atomic explosion caught the agency by surprise. Much of the controversy is inevitable.



As the nation's chief intelligence-gathering agency, the CIA depends for its effectiveness on secrecy. And the secrecy that shrouds the operations of the huge white building across the Potomac River from Washington is a ready target for congressional criticism.

To this criticism Mr. Dulles replies:

"We have learned the importance of secrecy in time of war. . . . But it is well to recognize that in the 'Cold War' our adversary takes every advantage of what we divulge openly or make publicly available."

A more serious charge is the one repeated last week by Sen. Wayne Morse in response to Mr. Dulles' statement. Appealing for close congressional scrutiny, the Oregon Democrat said the agency exercises "police state powers" and is free to promote objectives contrary to those of the Administration. Supreme Court Justice William O. Douglas also has accused the CIA of generating its own policies.

Officials of the agency, including director John A. McCone, deny the CIA has this power. It is subject to control by the President, the Secretary of Defense, and the Secretary of State. Its appropriations, though disclosed in published figures, must be approved by the Budget Bureau and

carried the "art of espionage to an unprecedented height."

Nevertheless, intelligence operations can have a decisive influence on foreign policy. The most dramatic example was Francis Gary Powers' U-2 flight over the Soviet Union. That incident torpedoed the 1960 Paris summit conference and embarrassed the Eisenhower Administration. The ill-fated Bay of Pigs invasion a year later and an alleged "intelligence gap" during last fall's Soviet missile buildup in Cuba have intensified demands for tighter congressional reins on the CIA.

Mr. Dulles says the present controls are sufficient. "Congress of course holds the purse strings," he writes. "Any . . . impression that senators and representatives can exert no power over the CIA is quite mistaken."

The chances are the procedures of the agency will remain substantially unchanged. Although proposals to establish a congressional watchdog committee crop up almost every year, none has come to a vote since 1956. Then, too, President Kennedy has satisfied some critics by tightening Executive supervision.

Most congressmen feel that the fruits of secrecy under present safeguards outweigh the dangers, particularly in view of the Soviet Union's intelligence network. The Russians, writes Mr. Dulles, have